

SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH

DEVOTED TO THE ILLUSTRATION OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

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WHOLE NO. 193.

The Principles of Nature.

THE DAVENPORT CIRCLE AGAIN.

NEW YORK, December 31, 1855.

The following article was written by Thomas L. Smith, Esq., a lawyer residing at New Albany, Ind., formerly one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of that State, and now on a temporary visit to this city. It was written on the evening of the day on which the manifestations occurred, without any view of its publication, and as a part of memoranda he has been making of the spiritual phenomena he witnessed in this city, for his own private use and that of his friends. Knowing the eager curiosity with which our readers are now perusing every reliable description of the phenomena developed through the Davenport medium, we have selected from Mr. Smith the privilege of publishing his manuscript, and to his, with some reluctance, consented to place it in our hands for that purpose. This description will be pursued with special interest by our patrons in Indiana, and other portions of the West, where Mr. Smith is extensively known.

Having heard that some extraordinary manifestations were to be witnessed at the spiritual circles held by a family named Davenport, I went this afternoon to attend one. It was to be held at No. 105 Bowery, at two o'clock, P.M.

Being there a little before the time, and understanding the manifestations were to be made in darkness, I examined particularly the room and its contents. It was an oblong hall, about forty feet in length by twenty in breadth. It was carpeted, and looked as if it had been fitted up for the use of some society.

At the end opposite the entrance there was a narrow

platform raised about a foot from the floor, with a desk in the center, and one at either end, as if for the use of a presiding officer, and a secretary and treasurer. At this end there were also three large windows, apparently opening into a back yard, but they were covered with a heavy drapery to effectually exclude the light. There was apparently but one door of entrance, and seats were disposed around the sides and ends of the room, which was in the second story of the building. The ceiling was about fourteen or fifteen feet in height from the floor. Two ordinary gas-burners depended from the ceiling near the middle of the room, and there was one or more projecting from the end wall, near the desks before mentioned. Two or three of these burners were lighted. There was no other window, door, or other opening into the room that I could perceive.

In front of the central desk on the platform, there was a small table with a marble top, and on this table was placed a dumb-caller, a violin, and a speaking trumpet. The dumb-caller is a stringed instrument about two feet in length, and nearly the same width, and weighed, I should suppose, about eighteen or twenty pounds.

Next the center of the room there was an oval table, made of mahogany or some other heavy wood. It had an extension apparatus, by which the ends could be drawn apart and the table lengthened by placing movable boards on the frame-work. There was no other furniture in the room beside that already mentioned and the seats, which were cushioned benches and heavy chairs, permanently fixed along the sides of the apartment, and some loose arm-chairs.

Upon this oval table there had been placed a guitar, a banjo, one or two violins, a tambourine, a hand bell about three inches in diameter, and a large speaking trumpet.

Two men appeared to have charge of the arrangements. One of them was the father of the medium. These latter were two boys of ordinary and rather rustic appearance. One appeared to be about sixteen, the other about fourteen years of age. I was favorably impressed with the appearance of all the party. They seemed perfectly willing, and even desirous that every precaution should be taken to prevent imposition or deception, but when any proposition was made they said they must first ask the Spirits. They announced, indeed, that they could not promise anything, or make any arrangement whatever without previous consultation.

At the time appointed the entrance door was closed and locked. There were about twenty-four or twenty-six persons present in the room, about half the number being ladies. The two boys were then seated at opposite ends of the oval table in arm-chairs. The spectators, together with the elder Davenport and his assistant, took seats around the sides and ends of the room, and all joined hands to prevent any one from taking part in the performances without the knowledge of the others. Throughout all the manifestations especial care was taken to have the hands of the two persons above mentioned held by some others in the company.

These dispositions being made, the lights were extinguished by shutting off the gas, and the room made dark. The visitors were requested to remain perfectly still. In a few moments a slight thumping was heard upon the strings of the guitar, which continued a short time and then died away. After a short interval several quick and loud sounds were heard from the guitar, as if the fingers of a player had been run over them abruptly and forcibly. These sounds were succeeded by a loud rapping, which, the medium said, indicated that the Spirits desired the alphabet to be called. One of them accordingly began calling the letters, and soon spelled out a request from the Spirits that the medium should be tied.

A light was accordingly made, and some ropes were produced with which each boy was firmly tied to the chair in which he sat. Their hands were also bound together by means of handkerchiefs, and one of the arms of each boy was fastened to the arm of his chair by a handkerchief. Every one in the room was satisfied that the boys were securely tied, and could not, in

that condition, reach or handle any of the instruments on the table with any effect.

The boys being thus fastened, the others again joined hands, and the lights were put out. Pretty soon there was again heard a thumping on one or more of the stringed instruments; then such as if they were moving about the table and striking each other; then loud snaps as if some of the strings of the guitar or violins were broken. Directly the trumpet appeared to be thrown violently upon the floor, and the stringed instruments, or some of them, were sounded in different directions, though not very far from the table, and occasionally their cases appeared to be thumped against each other and upon the floor.

After these noises had continued a short time they ceased, and the mediums spoke out and said their hands were being untied. Directly several things were thrown about the room, I was myself hit violently in the left eye by something. A light was now called for, and upon the room being lighted, I saw lying upon the floor near me two handkerchiefs that had been tied with as many knots as possible. They were handkerchiefs belonging to some of the visitors, which had been used in tying the boys' hands or arms. One of them was doubtless, the substance by which I had been hit. It was found also that some of the instruments that had been upon the table had been removed therefrom, and left in different parts of the room.

Another disposition was now made. The instruments were replaced upon the table, and the hands of the mediums being untied, two gentlemen seated themselves at opposite sides of the table between the mediums, so that there were then four persons around the table, who all joined hands. I was informed that one of these gentlemen was Mr. Day, well known for his improvements in the India-rubber manufacturers, and that the position both hands of each medium were secretly held by Mr. Day and Mr. Sweet, so that it was impossible that either of them could make any use of either hand without the knowledge of those gentlemen. As before, the other two men were again taken charge of by the visitors present, and all again joined their hands.

Things being thus disposed, the light was again shut off. Almost instantly the same kind of sounds were heard as before. The trumpet was thrown from the table on the floor—the strings of the instruments were thumped upon—the bell was jingled—the tambourine was thumped—and occasionally it would seem as if they were all clashed together. Sometimes the instruments were heard in different parts of the room. The guitar, violin, and tambourine were felt passing along in front of the visitors, occasionally touching some parts of their bodies, the strings sounding as they passed along. All at once there was a violent clash among the instruments on the table, and it was announced that the trumpet, which had been previously thrown upon the floor, had been thrown back upon the table with great violence. The gentlemen who were seated with the mediums said they could feel the instruments jived up and placed upon their heads, their shoulders and different parts of their bodies.

These manifestations having continued about ten minutes, the mediums were heard which, the medium said, called for light, and the room was accordingly lighted.

When the light was produced, the parties at the table were found precisely as they had taken their places. Messrs. Day and Sweet were holding the hands of the mediums, and said they had continued to do so all the time. During the darkness, a lady (who I was told was Miss Gould, the postress) had a handkerchief violently snatched out of her hand, and it was found under the table at which the mediums were sitting. As before, some of the instruments that had been upon the table were found in different parts of the room, mostly in the laps of the persons sitting around.

After an interval of a few moments, the mediums continuing at the table still fastened to their chairs, two ladies took the places of Messrs. Day and Sweet, and held the hands of the mediums. The other parties were arranged as before, and the lights put out. Very soon the instruments began to clash and play, but not so violently. In a little while the table began to move, carrying the parties around it along with it. It could be heard dragging slowly and heavily along the carpet. The ladies holding the hands of the mediums announced that they were forced from their seats, but the mediums, being fastened, were dragged along in their chairs. One of them called out repeatedly, and apparently in earnest, for a light; but the elder Davenport requested them to hold on, and not be alarmed. While the table was thus heard grinding along on the floor, the instruments seemed to be passing around the room, sounding as before. Presently the table arrived at a corner of the room in close proximity to three or four ladies who were sitting there, and the gas burners were now lighted.

The table was found to have been moved a distance of ten or twelve feet. The chairs of the mediums had been carried along with it, and the extension part had been drawn out, and the two ladies forced into the interval between the ends. It was also found that while most of the instruments that had been placed upon it were removed to different parts of the room, the dumb-caller, which was before upon the other table, had been carried over and put in their place. The distance which this instrument was carried must have been eight or ten feet, and it may have been lifted over the heads of several persons who were between the table on which it was resting before the light was put out, and the table on which it was found.

These dispositions being made, the lights were extinguished by shutting off the gas, and the room made dark. The visitors were requested to remain perfectly still. In a few moments a slight thumping was heard upon the strings of the guitar, which continued a short time and then died away. After a short interval several quick and loud sounds were heard from the guitar, as if the fingers of a player had been run over them abruptly and forcibly. These sounds were succeeded by a loud rapping, which, the medium said, indicated that the Spirits desired the alphabet to be called. One of them accordingly began calling the letters, and soon spelled out a request from the Spirits that the medium should be tied.

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A gentleman who appeared to be a stranger to all present requested an opportunity to satisfy himself by being placed alone with the mediums. The instruments having been replaced, he seated himself at one side of the table, holding both hands of each medium in his own. The other parties were disposed as before.

Upon the light being put out, the same noises were soon heard. Presently the trumpet was thrown violently to the end of the room. The stringed instruments were heard in different places. Directly the tambourine was heard thumping vigorously, and with something like a musical cadence, apparently upon the head of one of the parties of the table. The guitar and violins, or some of them, evidently passed around the room in close proximity to the persons who were sitting around, touching their feet, knees, bodies, etc., and occasionally thumping against the wall, all the time emitting sounds as if some persons were playing upon them, or running fingers across the strings. Occasionally the tambourine was heard thumping, and the bell ringing, and sometimes there were violent clashings, twangings and clangs that had little resemblance to the sound of any known instrument.

On the light being restored, the gentleman at the table said he had held the hands of the mediums all the time. Being requested to give his name, he said it was Briggs, and that he was a citizen of Baltimore. He said he had willed the tambourine to touch him upon the head, and it had done so by beating him a considerable time with a good deal of force. He further said he had never before witnessed any such manifestations.

After these experiments, the mediums appeared to be a good deal exhausted, and an intermission was had of about ten minutes, to enable them to recover.

Their impressibility was weakened in proportion to the number who were placed in contact with them. It was, therefore, proposed now to place them at the table by themselves, and as it was supposed to be pretty well ascertained by the previous experiments, that the instruments were moved and played upon without their hands. After these experiments, the mediums appeared to be a good deal exhausted, and an intermission was had of about ten minutes, to enable them to recover.

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